MOKO

No 4

A SERIOUS REVIEW

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Bauxite: Guinea will own her own

By NORMAN GIRVAN

A recent release from the United Nations on Guinea's new bauxite deal was hardly noticed in the Caribbean Press. But it is of great importance to us in the Caribbean.

For it shows that countries like ours can attract capital and skills from outside to develop their bauxite resources without giving these away to the large international corporations.

Central to Guinea's deal is the formation of the Compagnie des Bauxite de Guinee (CBG) which will produce and market up to 7 million tons of bauxite a year. CBG is owned jointly by the Guinea Government (49 percent) and seven international aluminium corporations (51 percent). Among these seven are Alcan Aluminium Ltd., owner of the Demerara Bauxite Company in Guyana and Alcan Jamaica Ltd., in Jamaica; and the Aluminium Company of America owner of bauxite companies in Surinam, the Dominican Republic and Jamaica.

The Government will receive 65 percent of the net profits of the CBG in taxes. In addition, the Government will, of course, earn 49 percent of profits after tax through its share in the CBG. Thus, in all the Government will receive about 82 percent of the profits on bauxite production. In the Caribbean, Governments receive from 35 to 45 percent.

The seven international aluminium companies have contracted with CBG for the purchase of 4.7 million tons of bauxite a year for the first five years and 5.1 million tons from the sixth year. All these arrangements explode the myth that the aluminium corporations will not enter into equitable partnership with Governments for the development of their bauxite resources; or will not buy bauxite from companies that they do not wholly own.

Another notable feature of the Guinea arrangements is the amount of external capital and skills the country will obtain, without making a gift of its assets to foreigners.

A new Railway

CBG's investment in bauxite mines and related facilities will be U.S. $100 million ,of which an undetermined amount will be provided by the aluminium companies. But the project also involves construction of an 85-mile railway from the mines to port, the construction of the port and a township. All these facilities will be owned by the Government of Guinea, which will finance their construction with loans from the World Bank and the United States A.I.D.

The World Bank loan amounts to U.S. $64.5 million, for 24 years at 6½ percent interest. The Guinea Government will service this debt out of its share in the profits of the CBG. The A.I.D. loan of $21 million will be made in Guinea currency, out of the proceeds of sales of United States surplus food in Guinea. Moreover, it is an intrinsic part of the agreement that Guinean employees will be trained to run the mines, railway and port.

The overall result of the project says the U.N. Press Release, is that it "will create employment, generate foreign exchange earnings, increase the Government's tax revenues, and advance the technological skills and administrative experience of Guinean nationals". But it should be also pointed out that all these benefits will be derived while retaining Guinean ownership of the assets created.

Why are the companies and the international agencies willing to agree to such terms? Because they want and need Guinean bauxite. Caribbean countries are presently supplying 90 percent of the raw material needs of the United States and Canada, over 12 million tons of bauxite a year.

Yet the companies operating in the Caribbean own the mines, the alumina plants, the internal transport and the port facilities 100 percent. They pay well under fifty percent of their profits in taxes, and the Caribbean Governments have virtually no control over exploration, production, processing or marketing.

How long will we allow this to go on?

THE NATIONAL OIL COMPANY

It is now nearly three months since the Prime Minister, as Political Leader of the People's National Movement, disclosed Government's intention to form a National Oil Company to a startled PNM party convention in San Fernando. Since then not much has been offered by way of public comment partly because not much has been publicly known. Comment is however, obviously in order.

There are two different but connected considerations which seem to be involved in a discussion of the proposal to form a National Oil Company. The first consideration relates to the view, publicly and surreptitiously expressed by people in several walks of life, that the decision to form such a Company has been an attempt to use not policy but politics to solve the nation's problems. The popular conception has been that the proposal was a skillful but transparent attempt to embarass, even to destroy, Mr. Geroge Weekes , President General of the Oilfields Workers Trade Union who had been at the same time invited to sit as a director in the Board of the proposed Company. Indeed, in reaction to the rumour, the Prime Minister has written a letter of assurance to the OWTU, and to Mr. Weekes, assuring them of the purity of his intentions the whole affair.

By JAMES MILLETTE

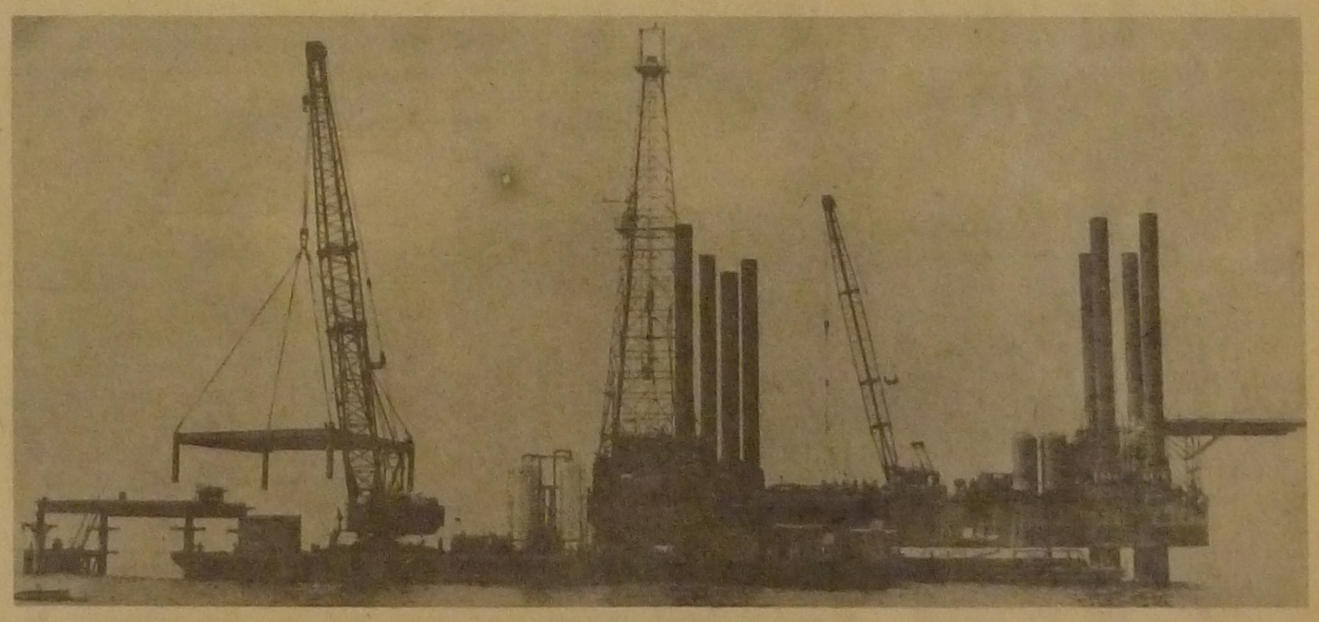
Question of Survival

Whatever we might think of the rumour (and of the implied denial) it must be admitted that its existence is a significant political fact , the more so, because it is generally seen as only a link in a connected chain of events which all tend toforcethe same conclusion.

The argument is that the survival as a government of the ruling People's National Movement has, within recent times, b ecome the central political issue in Trinidad and Tobago. Whatever one's allegiance that, after twelve years of PNM rule, is the issue. And the more urgent the issue, the more comprehensive are the means chosen to ensure a desirable solution.

The evidence in support of this theory reaches back into the past to demonstrate that even the official opposition itself has in many ways ,and certainly in the popular conception, been made part and parcel of the ruling political system. Popular theories from time to time circulating with respect to the behaviour of the DLP leadership suggest that at times that leadership has itself been an integral part of the People's National Movement.

More recent evidence is seen to be provided by the supplementary development programme of April 6 last year the failure of which was openly admitted in the Convention speech. It could be argued that it was bound to fail since it envisaged not real politics but a new political partnership between business interests and Government which was perhaps the red point of the exercise. Since then, the purchase of Orange Grove Estate and the recruitment of personnel to direct its affairs; the massive expenditures, on politically sensitive areas like housing, community and village development which have been forecast; the organisation of the loan capital to finance these projects ,including the financing of a (Final) Draft Education Plan that nobody but the Government seems to want; the debilitating existence of a savage party political intimidation which has successfully killed initiative in the public services, the teaching profession, and is now perhaps speculating on the prospects of converting the University into a chapel with rule and book, have all tended to reinforce the notion of an ascendancy of private political objectives over public benefit.



DRILLING FOR OIL

Cleaning the Stables

Even those acts which meet with general public approval, acts which are not contentious in any serious sense, like the cleaning of the stables which have recently taken place at the Public Transport Service Corporation take on, in the public view, the same sort of self - interested political overtones - particularly since this long overdue act of public charity seems in part to have been inspired by the fillip it would give to premature claims about the re-introduction of integrity into the conduct of the nation's business. The question is being openly asked as to whether or not the next General Election Campaign is already on.

The second consideration is the assessment of the proposal itself. What are the perspectives of the National Oil Company which it is proposed to form and where does the proposal leave us? The idea it will be recalled was hatched by the OWTU whose President General dispatched a memorandum to the Prime Minister on April 4, 1967 asking that Government should withhole approval of the threatened acquisition by Texaco of BP's assets in Trinidad. The memorandum proposed instead the public acquisition of BP's holdings in Trinidad.

It is now history that it has taken just about seventeen months, from April 1967 to September 1968, to elicit from Government a favourable and sympathetic response to the proposal. The date of the memorandum suggests the reason for

• Continued on Page 3

THERE WILL BE A GENERAL MEETING TO DISCUSS THE ORGANIZATION OF MOKO ON TUESDAY 17 DECEMBER, 8.00 P.M. AT STUDENTS' GUILD U.W.I.

ALL ARE INVITED.

By VERNON ARNETT, one-time Minister of Finance in the PNP Government.

JAMAICA- DICTATORSHIP or DEMOCRACY?

The Conference of the Peoples National Party held early November was of some importance since it marked the retirement of Mr. Norman Manley who has headed the Party since its formation thirty years ago. Mr. Manley has led the Party through a number of events of historical importance: the new constitution of 1943, the short-lived West Indian Federation and the Indpendence Constitution of 1962 which marked also the end of his two terms as head of the Government. In twenty-four years of two-party parliamentary rule in Jamaica the PNP has been in opposition for nearly seventeen years and been in office for seven.

The two men who dominated Jamaican politics since the stormy days of 1938 are now both in retirement. What was popularly known as "two-cousin" rule has ended. Both men had attracted large personal followings whose credo was "the leader is right." Neither of the two leaders has left an heir-apparent In Sir Alexander Bustamante's case, Mr. Shearer barely nosed past the late Mr. Clem Tavares. In Mr. Manley's case, what seems to be a very close fight has already developed between Mr. Michael Manley and Mr. Vivian Blake. (Mr. Manley's successor will be elected in February next year.)

Both Manley and Bustamante had shown how little really divided them in the practice of the art of everyday politics though they seemed to be poles apart ideologically. The dominance of both men extended a little beyond the end of a phase in Jamaica's political life and prior to the ceremonies of departure for each there were noticeable currents of impatience. And while it will take a little time for the glow of the charisma to vanish, Jamaican politics may now enter a period of greater fluidity more responsive to the restless elements in both parties and in the society as a whole.

But there is one outstanding difference in the departure of the two leaders which should be noted. No one expected Bustamante to give an account of his stewardship. Once the shocks of 1938 and his overwhelming victory at the polls in 1944 had been assimilated, Bustamante came to be closely identified with the established order, and ideas about progress were conditioned accordingly. It was not until 1955 that the unquestioning support he received was sufficiently whittled down for the PNP to have their turn in office. Manley who had been regarded as the apostle of change, in contrast to Bustamante, was put in charge. He now had the opportunity of proving that an elected government within the parliamentary system could start the work of creating a new social order. That is, that the people of Jamaica had a real choice and that it was up to them to prove whether they really desired change or were content to go along with the old order. And at the farewell conference, Jamaica wished to hear from Manley why this opportunity had not been taken And Jamaicans (other than the hard-core party supporters who attended an act of worship at the National Arena) expected (or hoped) that Mr. Manley would deal with the crucial problem of our society today.

The Problem Today

To say that it is a problem of social and economic inequality and that it is the task of this generation to solve this problem as it was the task of Manley's generation to achieve self-government (as Mr. Manley said in his speech) is to deny the realities of 1938. The real problem today is that after the revolt of 1948 which threw up a Jamaican leadership there has been no fundamental change in human relationships and that consequently the hostilities built into the society three hundred years ago still exist; that there has been no shift in responsibility from a foreign white dominance to a Jamaican democracy and that, in effect, the expatriates have merely been replaced by local overseers working for the same bosses. Further, that whereas in 1938 Jamaicans were born into a society which professed no ideals, since 1938 they have been born into a society which has professed high ideals and the gap between these ideals and reality has become intolerable.

The revolt of 1938 was against injustice, and injustice lies in the heart of the sufferer as, it is said, beauty lies in the eyes of the beholder. Unformulated and undefined, a new social order was demanded. Manley, in his early speeches, advocated self-government not as a feature in the exchange of white rulers for dark-skinned rulers but as the means whereby the social order could be changed And if the masses accepted Bustamante's pragmatism one should not discount the fear of "brown man" rule (as Manley pointed out) for the middle and upper classes had little to recommend them as possible saviours and a great deal to live down. But whether people accepted the call of Manley or Bustamante, what they wanted was change.

Also, it is falsifying history (certainly since 1942) to claim that the demand for self-government involved Jamaica in a struggle. In the final analysis, historians may well describe Jamaica as having been pushed into the waters of complete political independence. And at any time after 1944, the elected governments had the power to start the work of making fundamental changes in the social order. That Mr. Manley knows this to be true is signified by the bitterness of the attack in his speech on the young people, who he says, are decrying the achievements of the past. But these young people describe as betrayal the failure of the PNP, when it was given the chance in 1955, to initate any real policies of change.

Lost Confidence

The conservatism which took over the period since 1938 has been the major factor in destroying confidence in the two-party system, even in full independence,as a means of setting the society on a new course – away from inequality. What wonder then that the only solution seems to a growing number to be the unity of the black people (the people who suffer from poverty, discrimination and whose personal freedom is most threatened by the police and all the paraphernalia of law and order) in rejecting a bogus political system which has perpetuated injustice and in deciding to take matters in their own hands. If colonialism sowed the seeds of 1938, our two-party system since that outburst has kept the plant watered.

As to the conference as a whole, it is a sign of the deterioration in our political life that speeches tended to echo the sterile pronouncements of Government that violence must be condemned, national security must be maintained at all costs and that the remarkable signs of underlying revolt, manifest just three weeks before, were the work of a few intellectuals conscripting a criminal element. There was indeed no positive rejection by the Opposition of these concepts.

Growing Unrest

It would appear that if Jamaica has to rely on Government and official Opposition alone, repressive measures will be stepped up as unrest gains strength and that we are heading for a form of fascist dictatorship. Already one Government spokesman Mr. Roy McNeill, the Minister of Home Affairs, has categorised the violent out-burst of October as being the first of its kind in the history of Jamaica. One should perhaps excuse Mr. McNeill, a product of Jamaican secondary education and professional training, for ignorance of Tacky and other leaders of slave revolts or of Paul Bogle, but one must be aghast at his apparent ignorance of the 1938 revolt which cata pulted Bustamante into national leadership and found in Manley a leader of the self-government movement. It is a short step from ignorance or forgetfulness of this sort to wholesale intensified repression of any form of dissent and even of free discussion.

For if history and its consequences are to be so ignored or denied, a halt to progress has been called on the grounds that the only task left is to preserve on grounds of national security what already exists and to take care of the future with guns and more guns in the righteous cause of multi-racial unity. It is significant, for example, that Mr. Manley in his address, though admitting the great need for change, more positively argued that no government would hesitate to call on US (or UN) forces to preserve the established order. In effect, there was no positive demand, no positive proposal even for remedial action. Prevailing injustice was a subject for phrase-making and the need to keep law and order the positive motif.

Mr. Manley's attempt to identify Black Power with negritude was in line with the general policy that history should be forgotten; that in some remarkable way constitutional documents and modern institutions (including a Jamaican army) had wiped out white dominance of the society. But it is well to remember that the slave revolts were Black Power. The Maroons represented the success of Black Power. Paul Bogle canalised Black Power when he made his trek from Stony Gut to King's House. Black Power was shot down outside the Morant Bay Court House. Marcus Garvey made his indelible mark on Jamaica with Black Power. Bustamante in 1938 was a leader of Black Power – Marcus Garvey had foretold his coming.

Crumbling Structure

Though the structure is crumbling today because of historic neglect, the runaway slaves and the emancipated slaves rejected the plantation system and built up their own system in the mountains and back lands, tilling their own soil, supplying their own artisan services, entombing their springs and building their tanks, evolving their own methods of transport, feeding the town dwellers and contributing largely to the fruits and spices, the sugar and bananas to make good living on imported goods possible for the fortunate few. And still in conformity with the colonial pattern, they have been left to subsist on tired and diminishing soil and water while all the manure has been laid at the roots of white enterprise.

The Vacuum

Finally, there is a quotation from Mr. Manley's speech which is well worth noting. Mr. Manley said:

> "There is, as of now, no dictatorship in Jamaica. There is, as of now, two strong parties who believe in themselves and whose members believe in them. Between us, we control the majority of the people in Jamaica. There is no great political vacuum in this country."

According to this, the people are controlled by a machine of twin parts. All that is left is the struggle as to which twin, geographically right or left, is to be labelled Government or Opposition as party fortunes go up or down, but whichever the twin the dual control is the same. A vacuum of any significance must never be even conceded to exist.

But the vacuum does exist and as the dictatorship of the two-party establishment continues to become clearer, more and more of the alienated and dispossessed will move in to fill it. And while the under-dogs may be written off in the books, there are never going to be enough guns to quell the protest which injustice will keep on breeding.

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THE NATIONA

• From Page One

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too close to that other significant
date April 6, 1967. Presumably,
the supplementary development
programme had already been
decided upon. The Cabinet
reshuffle and closer association
with the traditional business were
already envisaged. It was, to
say the least, an unseasonable
moment for considering a
National Oil Company. And so
the National Oil Company had to
wait while the supplementary
development programme played
itself out to its fated end. It
had to wait, too, till the Tri-
partite talks, the shameless ex-
ploitation of the ISA and the
failure of the business com-
munity to fulfil some of the
promises made in April 1967
suggested that it was time for a
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THE NATIONAL OIL COMPANY

• From Page One

the delay. April 4, 1967 was too close to that other significant date April 6, 1967. Presumably, the supplementary development programme had already been decided upon. The Cabinet reshuffle and closer association with the traditional business were already envisaged. It was, to say the least, an unseasonable moment for considering a National Oil Company. And so the National Oil Company had to wait while the supplementary development programme played itself out to its fated end. It had to wait, too, till the Tripartite talks, the shameless exploitation of the ISA and the failure of the business community to fulfil some of the promises made in April 1967 suggested that it was time for a new and differentimitiative to be taken. It was time in fact to begin to talk with George Weekes and the Oilfield Workers Trade Union ,and the proposal which has now been made about a National Oil Company represents a political turnabout which, if not complete, is nevertheless significant.

National Company

All the information so far available point to a National Oil Company which will be fully owned by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago acting on behalf of the nationals of country. It will be principally a holding company directing the affairs of wholly owned subsidiaries or participating in the direction of companies established as joint ventures with other companies so far unnamed.These companies, not the National Oil Company, will be the ones engaged in the actual production of crude oil and gas, refined petroleum products and petrochemicals. In fact, the first thing the National Oil Company will be expected to do will be to establish a subsidiary company either wholly owned or joint-venture to run the holdings to be acquired.

The Oilfield Workers Trade Union has already asked a few questions to which the Prime Minister has recently replied. It now seems proper to ask a few more.

Question Number One: What will be the relationship between the National Oil Company and the subsidiaries and joint ventures which it is proposed to establish?

Question Number Two: Is it Government's intention that the joint-venture companies should reflect a majority interest by the National Oil Company, as it seems they should?

Question Number Three: What steps will be taken in the event that this is Government's intention, to ensure the establishment and the maintenance of this majority interest? In other words what will be the financial and other resources of the National Oil Company once the BP holdings are purchased?

Question Number Four: Who is leasing land to whom? Is it proposed that the National Oil Company should, like other Companies, lease land from the Government or is it intended, as the loosely worded reports might well be suggesting, to vest all oil-producing lands in the National Oil Company to be leased by it thereafter to its own subsidiaries, to the joint-venture companies and to other companies operating in the field?

To What End?

Question Number Five: What are the growth possibilities of the National Oil Company?

Question Number Six: What is the total conception of the National Oil Company? What will be its relationship to the oil industry as a whole and what will be the new relationship between the oil industry and the community? Finally, it might be said that Government's reply to the effect that it intends to have a permanent involvement in the oil industry of the country is not particularly illuminating. Government always had such a responsibility; in fact Government cannot escape it. The question to which this reply was given was, if one might paraphrase, whether or not, in the light of previous experience, Government was buying the BP holdings merely to sell them out again after a decent interval. That is, it seems a simple question and a simple and straightforward answer should be given.

Clear Perspectives

It is not too difficult to conclude that a National Oil Company is a step in the right direction. But a National Oil Company should have some very clear perspectives. The first and most important of these should be that such a Company should be the means by which the assertion of public ownership and control of the industry should be established. Personally I believe that such a development should happen sooner than later. The current attempt even if well conceived commits us to doing this in the long run not in the short run. There are some things which, if they are to be done well, must be done swiftly. But however it is done the ultimate object of national ownership and control of the industry must be clearly understood. Once this is clarified the entire situation changes. The rules of the game change and that, more than anything else, is what we want.

In practice this means that certain political policy decisions have to be taken. As a first step we should begin by correctly assessing the assets of all companies currently operating in Trinidad and Tobago. We then begin to talk about these assets with the public as a continuing participant in these discussions. The exercise should include an unremitting attempt to establish the size of capital investment introduced by the various companies into the country and the measurement of this investment against the current market value of their holdings. Questions like the level of profits on capital invested, the percentage of exported profits, the general profitability of the operations and the determination of how overall profitability compares with what might be called reasonable profitability will have to be delved into.

If all this is properly done we should be able to calculate the real costs of the ultimate acquisition of the entire industry. The point here is, and this is one of the rules that we have to change, that the existing system seems to confer a full perpetual equity right on companies here in respect of money originally invested.

The proposal which I am making is that original investment should incur the repayment of the sum invested plus an agreed level of profits on the investment after which control and ownership passed into national hands.

It is the perpetual right of invested capital to perpetual profits and with it the perpetual repatriation of a good part of those profits which constitutes the real bane of foreign investment in a country like ours.

Secondly, we have to begin also to take the mystery out of those aspects of company operations which maximize their profits here by effectively denying us the information on which to make informed assessments about the level of tax among other things. To accomplish this task we have to understand that it is in the character of the relationship between ourselves and the large international corporations that certain selective aspects of the operations should be withheld from national scrutiny and participation.

Some Proposals

Two of these areas have to do with marketing and with the higher levels of refinery production. In neither of these areas do we have nearly enough of the indigenous skills that we need. We have to admit what the critics of policies aimed at national establishment of ownership and control of the industry are saying. But we do not have to do nothing about it.

We need nationals in large numbers in precisely those high level areas of petroleum direction, production,marketing and accounting which we are being consistently told West Indians know nothing about.

This means that we cannot depend on the oil companies themselves to provide scholarships for the training of persons in the industry, nor permit them after such persons have been trained to place them where they wish irrespective of their real skills. The training of large numbers of nationals for full and responsible participation in the strategic areas of the oil industry must be one of the most serious responsibilities of the National Oil Company if and when it comes into being.

Salaries

There is a related question. It is the question of salaries. A National Oil Company operating in the interests of the people of Trinidad and Tobago should not offer to nationals the kind of salaries paid by foreign companies operating here with the specific intention of creating a local vested interest more attached to the Company than to the national interest it is supposed to be serving.

Salaries in the National Company and its subsidiaries have to be no more than that avialable to nationals with similar skills operating in comparable fields of employment. Moreover, salaries paid to nationals in the foreign companies, as well as salaries paid to foreigners, will have to be looked at also.

This is it which keeps nationals happy with the secondary, public relations roles more than anything else they are required to play in those companies. So that in sum we need not only correct and imaginative manpower planning and recruitment for the oil industry but also careful atention to the adoption of those corrective social measures which have to be taken in order to convert the oil industry into a truly national industry.

Implications

All these are difficult,courageous decisions which we have to take. They will involve the proper enforcement of the work permit regulations in so far as the oil and allied industries are concerned: they will involve a serious look at the internal distribution of petroleum products, at the pioneer aid schemes operating in the industry and at our relations with the other Caribbean countries and with the world oil industry as a whole. We have to stop being a half-partner of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries and to foster at all levels those conceptions and policies which will put the international oil industry in a different mold and give us a more meaningful role in it. We have, too, to establish abroad embassies which are more concerned and knowledgeable about our serious interests in oil and sugar and other commodities. The advantage which others have over us has always been and still remains very largely an advantage in having a more complete view of critical aspects of operations in which we have a vital interest.

We have to seek to liquidate that advantage, to begin to derive our own sources of information relating to our vital trading interests. In oil and sugar, as in BWIA, the requirement is for representatives abroad who know about the history and the operations of those industries.

Commitment

The gentle courtier rating ambassadorial politenesses over hardheaded knowledge and commonsense is not only an anachronism in this ruthless age he is a dangerous and expensive luxury.

In sum we have to commit ourselves to perspectives rather than to people. And people have to begin to make personal commitments to what they believe in. That is what a perspective and a policy are all about. Much of what has been said here has had as its essential background the fact that it is in the character of the Western political system to play at politics without involving itself in policy. The preoccupation of that system is to deal with dissent and opposition by gobbling it up or accommodating with it: always the man never the ball.

The political response to challenge is never to deal with the problems but to deal with the leaders of the discontented and to seek to absorb them as hurriedly as possible into the existing ruling structure, whatever it is.

That precisely is the position at which we have arrived today. But politics is not enough. Clearly we need some policies too.

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OJUMBIE

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MOKO

A SERIOUS REVIEW

No 4

Price 10 cts. up

The Writer and Society

By WINSTON HACKETT

In an all-out bid to grapple with a highly problematic situation, West Indian experts have tended to lay most of their emphasis on sociological research, underscoring continually the need for a change in the existing economic structure as a first step in the task, of freeing us from the paralysing self-conceptions imposed by the plantation system. Even the most scientific of these observers have evinced a passion for reform.

In this atmosphere of sociological abstraction and historical determinism – one so conducive to a faith in the heart of the politician to a faith in the art of the politician – the importance of the role of the creative artist in helping to shape the consciousness of Caribbean people, can never be overemphasized.

People as abstractions

Both sociologist and politician see masses of people, the former as products of systems, the playthings of impersonal forces, the latter,as groups amenable to his handling. The political observer, in his passion for reform, is often tempted to deny the existence of what is real in human relationships. The recent pronouncement of a University lecturer on the non-existence of antagonism between Indian and Negro in the Caribbean is a case in point. If 'antagonism' is too gaudy a word to use, let us at least be prepared to admit that a certain degree of mutual distrust, enough to thwart effective collaboration between the two racial groups, does exist. To deny this is to shut one's eyes to reality. No political myth can establish that common ground of emotion on which these islands of consciousness can lose their isolating forces in favour of a national assertion. The old boast that 'all of we is one' is simply a national untruth. Even on Carnival day the differences show up. Unity can never be imposed.

Nor is this a condemnation of sociology, politics and historiography. One is simply saying that the level of reality explored by the writer is one not readily accessible to politician,sociologist or historian.

It is the business of the writer to see what others either cannot see, or refuse to see. His prime concern is with things as they are. Where the politician discerns unity or the likelihood of racial harmony, the serious writer cannot help seeing discord, and the continued esixtence of discord. Naipaul, inspite of all the antipathy he arouses, and barring a few wild inaccuracies in "The Middle Passage', remains our most honest analyst. Perhaps a second Naipaul based in Trinidad is needed to analyse our present hysteria. What this sick society needs so badly is laceration. Our derivativeness, our hypocrisy, our frustration, our mediocre cruelty, and to crown it all, a brash philistinism trumpeting under the guise of intellectual disgust, that seeks to discredit the efforts of a meaningful few – these must be understood.

Art and Identity

Moreover, it is the artist alone who can give us what we need most of all – a name. It is his duty to go beneath those externals imposed by sociologist and politician, to explore the individual anguish, to plumb those 'unrealized wells of feeling' that Harris has spoken of, to define us in our capacity for transcending outer categories, or for deepening our enslavement within them. Because of his awareness of the tragic he can provide true definition. It is his imagination that can so re-order history, that it is translated from necessity to freedom.

Dream on Monkey Mountain

Ham's powerful plea for a grasp of the tragic in our predicament has not gone unheeded. It has been answered by Walcott's 'Dream on Monkey Mountain', in which the old themes of dispossession in exile, of poverty, devacination, schizophrenia and mass bewilderment under an imposed colonial structure, have been fused with the consummate skill we have come to expect of a writer who has for the past twenty years, stuck doggedly to the difficult task of defining his situation, who has, indeed, made his soul the theatre of West Indian conflict.

Universality

And struggles that are more than just West Indian are revealed in this play: the universal conflict between ideal and harsh reality so harrowing to the visionary, and the timeless metaphysical battle of black and white. In his tragic-comic quest a legendary Africa, the burnt-out charcoal-burner hero, Maklals, acquiesce the towering grandeur of all history's heroes: Othello, Moses, King Lear, Christ and Don Quixote.

What one would like to see for the New Year is a reproduction of this play. By then, one dares to hope, the ever-growing dialogue in the Press will have increased an awareness of West Indian problems and heightened the receptivity of local audiences.

THINKING OF SECURITY

By DOUGLAS HALL

NO ONE can sensibly challenge the right and duty of a government to preserve public order and to prevent the overthrow of the state by violent means. The real issue, in any democratic society, is how a government can properly exercise this right and duty with the least possible damage to the rights of the individual citizen.

One of these rights, under the rule of law which we accept, is that no man shall be judged guilty without proof of his guilt. Mere accusation is not enough. The accused person has the right to plead 'not guilty' and to offer his defence against accusation. This is the normal and accepted procedure in our courts of law.

In cases in which a person is charged with subversive activities, with plotting to overthrow the state by unconstitutional and illegal means, a government can reasonably claim that ordinary open legal procedures cannot safely be followed. The publication of the details of the plot, of the names of the parties involved in it, of the ways in which the subversive activities were discovered and followed by the security force, or the calling and examination of witnesses might cause public harm or undermine the effectiveness of the security force itself. All this is understandable.

Prosecutor, Jury and Judge

But just as the country should be protected, so too should the accused. The country must be protected from assault, the accused person must be protected against unjust sentence. These are equal duties of government, especially in those cases in which government itself denies to the accused the ordinary procedures of the open court. An accused person has three very basic rights: first, that he should hear the charges against him; second, that he should be allowed to answer his accusers; and third, that judgement should be passed by some impartial person who has heard both the accusations and the statement in defence. A Security Force is an arm of government. When a person is charged by them, and the charge is heard only by government, and government passes judgement without calling the accused to defend himself, then government assumes to itself the roles of prosecutor, jury, and judge.

In such circumstances an unjust government can easily destroy an innocent person. All that needs to be done is to accuse him and to pass sentence on him. And if anyone should challenge the charge or the sentence the answer is very simple: government can claim to have acted in the interest of society at large, and claiming that secrecy is essential, refuse to disclose evidence or even the precise nature of the accusation itself.

But it is not only unjust governments that may act in this way. A nervous or unstable government is also liable to stretch its powers in order to protect itself. A nervous or unstable government fears criticism and may fall into the mistake of trying to silence criticism by calling it subversion and dealing with it as such. In so doing it would deny to the individual another of his basic democratic rights, namely, the right to criticise.

And even when a government is strong, stable, and impeccably intentioned there are still the dangers of a wrong assessment. The job of a Security Force is to find out and to follow the activities of traitors and subversives and to bring them to account. When a person comes under their notice he has become SUSPECT. That means that he is watched and his subsequent sayings and actions are treated with suspicion. The Security Force follows him waiting to make note of every suspicious word or action. The tendency therefore is to take things out of context – an action here, a statement there – and the dossier grows.

The Need for Proof

This does not deny either the competence or the good intention of the Security Force. The fact is that they cannot record everything a suspected person says and does. They have to be selective. But acting in this way they tend to record only those actions and words which seem to them to be suspicious or to carry clear evidence of guilt. The fact is that suspicious behaviour PROVES nothing. If a man is seen loitering around a parked car he may be thought to be behaving suspiciously. But he cannot be guilty until he breaks the law, and, he may have no intention of doing so. What LOOKS suspicious is often quite innocent. The submissions of a Security Force should always be very carefully scrutinized in order to protect the innocent person who has simply been behaving in a suspicious way but in fact has done no wrong.

When there is PROOF of guilt the case is clear.

Protecting the Innocent

The difficulties can now be clearly shown. We are concerned, as we should be in a democratic society, to protect the innocent from wrongful accusation and sentence. These may follow from the evil acts of an unjust government, or from the misguided acts of an unstable government, or from the built-in bias which Security Force reports can scarcely avoid.

As far as unjust governments are concerned there is little that can be said. They are not likely to yield either to reasonable persuasion or to constitutional pressures and if they do not they must either be tolerated or overthrown.

But how can the individual be protected against unfair treatment in the two other cases? The crux of the matter lies in the fact that the Security Force's information, which is unlikely to be entirely dispassionate, is scrutinized only by members of government, and that government may be unstable and consequently nervous. The only apparent answer is that the normal democratic rights of the accused person(to defend himself and to be impartially judged) should in some way be brought in to reduce the possibilities of injustice.

A government's essential position is that when the national security is threatened the danger lies in the realm of national defence in which the ordinary courts and the justices have no constitutional authority. The defence of the land lies not with the courts but with the Minister of Defence, or his equivalent.

Cloaking the Issue

This should not be allowed to cloak the real issue. Attack is one thing, accusation of in citing attack is another. In the first case the situation is clear. The act has been done and can be met. In the second there is an accused person whose guilt should be clearly established before punishment can be justly meted out. The necessary discussion about the best way of ensuring this should therefore begin with the consideration of ways in which such an accused person might be given the opportunity to speak, even in great secrecy, in his defence; and in which some scrutiny of the case by some third party, again, if necessary, in secrecy, might be allowed. And, since the question is one of the substantiveness of evidence it would seem that a High Court Judge might best be chosen as the third party.

The Need For Impartial Justice

These are not ideal suggestions. Far from it. There are accused persons who from lack of skill in argument cannot adequately defend themselves. This emphasises the need for the impartial third party. There are Justices who are not impartial. This emphasises the need to allow the accused to speak in his own defence. But the world has never been an ideal place.

What we should always demand is that as far as our weaknesses allow we strive towards the ideal. In any democratic society the rights of an accused man to hear the charges levelled against him, to defend himself and to be impartially judged, must, as far as possible, be preserved. To the extent that we undermine democratic rights we also undermine democracy. To the extent that our constitutional arangements obstruct the individual's enjoyment of those democratic rights we should always be ready to consider constitutional reforms. The willingness of any democratic government to discuss the ways by which democratic rights can be extended and preserved is assumed. The dangers inherent in the sacrifice of democratic rights in order to save democracy are obvious.

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